

# **New Hampshire Special Education Audit Report**

**Granite State High School  
Concord State Prison  
NH Department of Corrections**

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## **Final Report**

January 22, 2001

**Visit Conducted on: October 16, 2000**

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# New Hampshire Special Education

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*Note: It should be noted that suggestions are not considered corrective actions and therefore are given as technical assistance. The district is not mandated to implement them.*

# **New Hampshire Special Education**

## **Granite State High School Concord State Prison NH Department of Corrections October 16, 2000**

### **I. Introduction:**

A New Hampshire Department of Education Special Education Audit visit was conducted at Granite State High School at the Concord State Prison, NH Department of Corrections on October 16, 2000 in order to review the status of special education services being provided to eligible inmates with disabilities.

Activities related to this evaluation included the close review of all the teaching certifications of special education staff and random inspection of two student records. Interviews were conducted with the school administration, as well as regular and special education staff as time and availability permitted. Throughout the visit, the team had full cooperation from the school personnel and this helpfulness was greatly appreciated.

The report that you are about to read represents the consensus of all the members of the visiting team. Please keep in mind that this is a "report for exception", meaning that only exceptions to the NH State Standards have been addressed. If a component is not mentioned, that does not mean that the team did not review it; it just means that there were no citations of noncompliance to the Standards found in that particular area.

### **II. Status of Previous Program Approval Visit:**

This was the first special education program approval visit conducted by the New Hampshire Department of Education.

### **III. Issues of Significance**

The visiting team members were impressed with the quality of the programming and services made available to eligible inmates with disabilities enrolled at the Granite State High School at the Department of Corrections Special School District. The special education programs are located at the NH State Prison in Concord NH and provide services to eligible inmates who have educational disabilities. Staff and administration at the Granite State High School were consistently described as caring, dedicated, well intentioned and enthusiastic about their work. The staff at the Granite State High School are a valuable asset to the program in their work with a very challenging student population in a very restrictive environment. Teachers were recognized as skilled, knowledgeable, well certified and demonstrated an exceptional ability to provide uniquely designed instruction for each of the courses they teach. The review team further noted that inmates with disabilities attending the programs are provided with a full continuum of services ranging from 1:1 instruction, self-contained programming to resource room support and a modified regular curriculum. The curriculum and instruction offered to all

inmates is well developed and is age and ability appropriate. The staff is commended for their recent and ongoing efforts to connect their curriculum to the New Hampshire Curriculum Frameworks.

While conducting the compliance review, the visiting team identified only a few citations that warrant immediate attention. Most of the issues revolve around situations unique to the Department of Corrections, including reporting of discipline data, meeting timelines and tracking historical information and educational records as it relates to individual inmates. In addition, it was recommended that administration reviews the language in the Granite State High School policies and procedures to ensure that wording reflect IDEA '97. For example, the policies should consistently refer to inmates with disabilities, rather than "child with educational handicap". It was further noted that the IEP forms currently being used do not meet all requirements of IDEA 97 and that the contents of IEP's need to be written in accordance with IDEA 97.

As the Granite State High School looks to the future, it will be important for the program to review policies and procedures regarding issuing of credits towards a high school diploma for inmates with disabilities. Many questions were raised regarding this issue and further evidence needs to be provided to ensure that inmates with disabilities are earning credit for all their course work. It was also noted that policies related to the management of educational records, including policies outlining the Right to Review and Inspect Educational Records need to be developed and adopted in the near future. Lastly, the Granite State High School, Department of Corrections Special School District should seriously consider the revision of their Master Professional Development Plan and the development of a District Improvement Plan which outlines long term program improvement goals for the school district. Both of these plans should be closely aligned and clearly articulated to the staff at the Granite State High School.

The visiting team would like to thank the Granite State High School staff for their welcoming spirit during this program approval visit and congratulate them for the excellent work they do on a daily basis.

#### **IV. COMMENDATIONS:**

- The Granite State High School Staff are commended for their quality work on behalf of all the inmates with disabilities attending the programs.
- The educational staff and administration are commended for the quality of instruction offered to the inmates with disabilities and for the work done to connect the curriculum to the New Hampshire Curriculum Frameworks.
- The educational administration is commended for providing the school staff with the appropriate resources necessary to provide services to this complex group of inmates.
- The educational leadership provided by the administration is well recognized and the results of their efforts are reflected the quality programs.
- The course offerings and resources available to the inmates are impressive.
- The Granite State High School is commended for its well-established transition planning and connections to community resources.
- The school environment is safe, clean and conducive to the teaching and learning process.
- The level of respect between staff and inmates is to be commended.

#### **CITATIONS:**

##### Ed.1109.01 IEP Components

The IEP's reviewed did not have all the required components, specifically the new requirements outlined in IDEA 97 (i.e. measurable annual goals with benchmarks or objectives). One IEP reviewed lacked all the required elements for a transition plan.

##### CFR300.347(a)(7)I Measuring Student Progress

One IEP lacked evidence of how the inmate would be informed of their progress on behavior management goals.

##### Ed.1119.08(a) Diplomas

Further evidence is needed to document that all inmates with disabilities have equal opportunity to complete a course of studies leading to a high school diploma. This would include policies and procedures related to the earning of high school credits for special education courses, directed studies, resource room support, etc.

##### Ed. 123.0 Confidentiality of Information, Education Record Management

##### Ed.1123.0 Definitions

##### Ed.1123.03 Student Rights

##### Ed.1123.04, CFR330.560 Institutional Policy

Granite State High School needs to develop a policy as it relates to the management of educational records.

<b>Granite State High School, Continued</b>
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**Corrective Actions:**

- Develop/clarify policies and procedures relating to the management of confidential educational records.
- Update IEP forms and provide additional training to staff in writing and developing IEP's to ensure they meet IDEA 97 requirements.
- Revise Master Professional Development Plan and begin a discussion around writing and implementing a District Improvement Plan.
- Consider the provision of high school credits for special education courses offered to inmates with disabilities, as well as credit for support offered by the special education programs.

**SUMMARY**

Overall, the visiting team was impressed with the ongoing program improvement and willingness to strengthen the programs being offered at the Granite State High School. The knowledge, skill and areas of specific expertise found at the New Hampshire Department of Corrections Special School District are impressive and can serve as an important resource to inmates with disabilities. The visiting team recognizes the educational staff for striving to meet the needs of all learners. The team enjoyed visiting the programs at the Granite State High School and would like to acknowledge the staff and administration for their skills, dedication and the quality of services they provide to all the inmates enrolled in the educational programs.